

**Collection #**  
**M 1011**  
**OM 0500**  
**DVD 0200**  
**CT 2151**

**MICHAEL A. BLAIN**  
**MATERIALS, 1937–2010**

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Processed by

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 2 OVA manuscript folders, 2 photograph folders, 1 DVD, 1 cassette tape, 1 VHS, 6 artifacts

COLLECTION DATES: 1937–2010

PROVENANCE: Michael A. Blain, Indianapolis, Indiana, March 2010

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Indiana Jewish Historical Society Collection, 1845–2002. Manuscript Collection: M 0743. State of Israel Bonds Organization, Indiana Records, 1948–2005. Manuscript Collection: M 0932.

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2010.0070

NOTES: This forms part of the collection of the Indiana Jewish Historical Society.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michael A. Blain was born Maylech Blobstein on March 2 1928, in a village in Carpatho-Ruthenia, which was part of the former Czechoslovakia, later part of Hungary and now part of the Ukraine. At the age of fourteen, in 1942, Blain's parents sent him to Budapest, Hungary to learn a leather-goods trade. In 1944, Nazi forces arrived in Budapest. A 2006 article written by Ron Hamilton in Shelbyville, Indiana's *The Shelbyville News* summarizes Blain's experiences during the Holocaust:

"After being consigned to a labor camp and a Jewish ghetto, he was sent to the Russian front and ordered to dig trenches for the German army... On more than one occasion, he [was] rescued by Jewish friends who infiltrated the Hungarian army and stole military uniforms. After several brushes with death, Blain was liberated by Russian occupation forces in January 1945."

Upon his return to Czechoslovakia, Blain learned that most of his family members had been sent to Auschwitz concentration camp, where all but his brother, Sam, were killed. For the next few years, Blain lived in multiple countries in Europe until he moved to the United States in 1949.

Within a few months of moving to the U.S., Michael Blain was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to the Far East and the Korean War. After his time in the Army, Blain attended Rochester Institute of Technology, where he met his wife, Sylvia. While earning his B.S., Blain was the founder and first president of Hillel and edited the Rochester Institute of Technology newspaper. After moving to Cleveland in 1957, Blain was president of his B'nai B'rith lodge and a very active member of B'nai B'rith International. He has also been distinguished for his work as editor of the *Cleveland Craftsman*, a technical magazine.

Since moving to Indianapolis in 1971, Blain has served on the boards of Beth-El Zedeck, B'nai Torah, JFGL, JEA/BJE, JCRC, Lubavitch of Indiana and the Hasten Hebrew Academy where he had been vice-president and scholarship committee chairman for over 20 years. He is also past president of Keren L'Israel Investment Club, and a founder of the Indianapolis Yiddish Club. Blain has been a leather craftsman, printer, writer, editor, lecturer, teacher and volunteer, but he is most widely known for his work as head of the Indiana-Illinois Regional Office of Israel Bonds from 1973–2006. During his tenure there, Blain's office generated some \$100 million investment capital for Israel.

Blain is a recipient of numerous awards, some of which are included in this collection. Michael and his wife, Sylvia, have three sons, twelve grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren (as of 2009).

Sources:

Information from the collection.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This series is a collection of items relating to Michael A. Blain of Indianapolis, Indiana. Materials include Blain's personal papers: biographical materials, certificates, letters, clippings, articles, pamphlets, programs, photographs, and other miscellaneous papers. The collection also includes six plaques/awards, one videocassette, one DVD, one audiocassette, two passports, one prayer book, thirty-two business/ID/membership cards, and one photograph of Haifa. The collection is broken into three series:

**Series 1: Biographical and Personal Materials, 1937–2010:** This series contains a range of biographic materials about Michael Blain. This includes official U.S. documents, such as Blain's citizenship paper, a legal name change document, U.S. Army discharge form, and marriage certificate. Official Czech documents include Blain's Czech birth certificate, a document verifying that he was born in the village of Silce, a document confirming his ability to vote, and a travel document which enabled Blain to immigrate to the United States. Other materials in this series include multiple printed biographies, two passports, a U.S. Army Jewish Prayer Book, thirty-two business/ID/membership cards, newspaper clippings and memorabilia from publicity events, and a newspaper article about the marriages of Blain's family members. This series is contained in folders 1–7 in the first manuscript box of the collection. There are no oversized items in this series.

**Series 2: Photographs, ca. 1952–1958:** This series contains the collection's photographic materials. There are three black and white photographs, one of Michael Blain in Europe with his family during WWII, another from Blain's time in Korea in 1953, and a third picture of Michael Blain with Richard Nixon (n.d.). There are also two color photographs of Michael Blain at an event (ca. 1977). The photographs are housed in photograph folders 1 and 2. This series also includes two photocopied pictures which are kept in folder 8 of the manuscript box. There is also an oversized photograph which is a framed picture of Haifa, Israel signed by Arie Gurel, the Mayor of Haifa in 1988. This photo is kept in OM 0500: Folder 1.

**Series 3: Awards and Honors, 1954–2009:** This series contains items relating to the awards and honors that Michael Blain has received throughout his life. Included in this are event programs, printed materials, miscellaneous awards and certificates, and six plaques. Awards/honors vary and are related to Blain's participation with the State of Israel Bonds, the Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis (HAI), B'nai B'rith International, the International Association of Printing House Craftsman, among others. Honors also include two honorary citizenship awards from New Orleans, and one from the state of Texas. The series includes a VHS which was shown at a 1999 reception honoring Blain's twenty-five years of involvement with the State of Israel Bonds. The VHS is included in the manuscript box with other materials relating to this event.

## **SERIES CONTENTS**

### **Series 1: Biographical and Personal Materials, 1937–2010**

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Michael Blain Official U.S. Documents, 1949–85	Box 1, Folder 1
Michael Blain Passports and U.S. Armed Forces Jewish Prayer Book, 1945–85	Box 1, Folder 2
Michael Blain Official Czech Documents, 1937–49	Box 1, Folder 3
Michael Blain and Family Publicity Clippings and Items, 1985–2010	Box 1, Folder 4
Michael Blain Biographies, 1957–2009	Box 1, Folder 5
Michael Blain Published Articles, 1949–56	Box 1, Folder 6
Michael Blain Letterhead and Business/Membership Cards, 1966–2010	Box 1, Folder 7
“Michael Blain Relates His Life Story on Tape,” n.d.	CT 2151

### **Series 2: Photographs, ca. 1942–1988**

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Michael Blain and Two Family Members, ca. 1942	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
Michael Blain in Korean War, 1953	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 1
Michael Blain and Richard Nixon, n.d.	Photographs: Box , Folder
Michael Blain Event Color Photos, ca. 1977	Photographs: Box 1, Folder 2
Michael Blain Portrait Photocopy, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 8
Israel Bonds Event Photocopy, 2006	Box 1, Folder 8
Signed Photo of Haifa, Israel, 1988	OM 0500: Folder 1

Michael Blain – His Life in Pictures DVD, n.d.

DVD 0200

**Series 3: Awards and Honors, 1954–2009**

CONTENTS

State of Israel Bonds Event Materials, 1985–2009

HAI-Life Award Materials, 1995

Michael Blain Miscellaneous Awards, 1954–2008

Miscellaneous Oversized Awards, 1966–99

Rochester Institute of Technology Hillel Founder  
Appreciation Award, 1960

International Association of Printing House  
Craftsman, Editor Emeritus Award, June 12 1974

President of Keren L’Israel Investment Club Plaque,  
1993

Prime Minister’s Club Member Plaque, ca. 1994

Israel Bonds Waterford Crystal Nameplate, n.d.

State of Israel Bonds 25 Years of Service Award,  
December 31 1998

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 9

Box 1, Folder 10

Box 1, Folder 11

OM 0500:  
Folder 2

ART: 2010.0070

ART: 2010.0070

ART: 2010.0070

ART: 2010.0070

ART: 2010.0070

ART: 2010.0070